



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Office of Higher Education

Testimony by
Jane A. Ciarleglio
Executive Director
before the Executive & Legislative Nominations Committee
February 11, 2015

Thank you Senator Duff, Representative Janowski and members of the Committee. I am Jane Anne Ciarleglio from Hamden, and I am honored to be here today and to have been re-nominated by Governor Malloy to serve a second term as Executive Director of the Office Higher Education.

I would first like to thank Governor Malloy for allowing me to continue to lead the important work of our agency, and I am deeply appreciative to be sitting in front of this Committee. Many of you have known me for decades as I have had a life-long career in public service, starting here and then moving onto the Office of Policy and Management, the administration of Governor Bill O'Neill, and the City of New Haven where I was raised and educated. In 1995, I joined the Department of Higher Education as its legislative liaison and then became Deputy Commissioner. Following the 2011 reorganization of higher education, I became Executive Director of the Office of Higher Education, the successor agency to the former Department of Higher Education.

The legislature created our agency four years ago as part of the reorganization. Two years ago, we were made an independent agency, separate from the Board of Regents for Higher Education. Among our many functions, we are charged with upholding the state's high academic standards for non-profit and for-profit private postsecondary institutions, and with administering the state's student financial aid programs across all private and public colleges and universities. I am pleased to share long-overdue accomplishments on both fronts.

61 Woodland Street • Hartford, CT 06105-2326
www.ctohe.org
An Equal Opportunity Employer

First, we designed a new approach for awarding state financial aid which puts students, and their financial needs, front and center of all calculations. This reform, the first in 30 years, combines the state's three previous programs into the consolidated Governor's Scholarship Program. This new program provides consistent amounts of aid to students no matter the type of college they attend, enabling students and their families to better plan for college costs. Equally important, the GSP Program contains incentives to encourage students to graduate on time – a critical policy issue facing educators nationwide. We have presented our program as a model approach for other states.

Second, following years of complaints, we obtained legislative approval to accelerate our process for acting upon proposals for new academic programs and institutions in the independent sector. What once took up to six months (and sometimes longer) now takes less than 45 days. This enables colleges to respond more quickly to student and employer demands for instruction in new fields while still assuring that Connecticut's high standards for academic quality are satisfied.

Through this function, known as licensure and accreditation, we provide consumer protection for students in the collegiate sector. We also provide oversight of Connecticut's 78 postsecondary schools, and, as recently mandated by lawmakers, regulation of the state's 78 hairdresser and barber schools in coordination with the Department of Public Health.

In addition to student financial aid and academic oversight, we administer a variety of programs which serve students, such as minority student college access and retention initiatives, veterans program approval, national and community service, and the state's Alternate Route to Certification. ARC, as it is commonly known, is the state's largest producer of newly certified teachers who work in Connecticut. ARC trains talented adults for certification mainly in shortage areas such as mathematics, the sciences and world languages.

Across our agency, our staff works on behalf of students by assuring that they have access to high quality postsecondary education. Without question, we have many challenges before us: the growth of for-profit higher education and on-line instruction, the duty to maintain adequate financial aid for our

neediest students, attracting the brightest professionals to enter teaching, and assuring college readiness for all students seeking to better themselves through education. I am confident, however, that through our continued work with you, the Governor's Office, and our college and university leaders, we will successfully address these challenges and more for the benefit of all qualified students and taxpayers.

My thanks, again, to Governor Malloy for his continued confidence, and to you for your time today. I would be happy to respond to questions.